



# **Reducing Environmental Cancer Risks**

Personal insights from the President's  
Cancer Panel Report

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October 18, 2010



# The President's Cancer Panel

- Established in 1971 by the National Cancer Act.
- 3-person Federal advisory committee.
- Appointed by the U.S. President.
- Reports directly to the President.



# The President's Cancer Panel



LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.S., Chair



Margaret L. Kripke, Ph.D.

*awaiting White House appointment of third Panel member*

Executive Secretary: Abby Sandler, Ph.D.



# Mission of the PCP

- The Panel shall monitor the development and execution of the activities of the National Cancer Program, and shall report directly to the President.
- Any delays or blockages in rapid execution of the Program shall immediately be brought to the attention of the President.



# How the Panel Fulfills its Mission

- Convenes public meetings at least four times per year
- Generates an annual report
  - Report findings
  - Make recommendations
- Disseminates
  - President of the United States
  - Government agencies
  - Congress
  - Cancer-Related Organizations
  - Public (<http://pcp.cancer.gov>)





# Topic Selection

- PCP staff identifies a list of topics of potential interest.
- Panel members review background information on several topics.
- Panel members and staff discuss the pros and cons of each topic.
- Staff members write a concept paper on the chosen subject matter.



# 2008-2009 Report





# 2008-2009 Meeting Series

## *Environmental Factors in Cancer*

- Sept. 16, 2008                      East Brunswick, NJ
  - *Industrial and manufacturing exposures*
- Oct. 21, 2008                      Indianapolis, IN
  - *Agricultural exposures*
- Dec. 4, 2008                      Charleston, SC
  - *Indoor/outdoor air pollution and water contamination*
- Jan. 27, 2009                      Phoenix, AZ
  - *Nuclear fallout, electromagnetic fields, and radiation exposure*





# Meeting Speaker Selection

- PCP staff identified speakers from academia, government, and the environmental and cancer advocacy communities.
- A total of 45 experts provided testimony at the meetings.





# Industrial and Manufacturing Exposures

## Key Points:

- Enforcement of existing regulations is inadequate.
- Some hazardous substances remain unregulated.
- < 2% of chemicals in commercial use have been tested for carcinogenicity (Reactionary vs. Precautionary approach).
- Regulatory reform, enforcement and a comprehensive cancer prevention strategy are needed to limit exposures to cancer-causing chemicals.





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# Agricultural Exposures

## Key Points:

- The impact of agricultural chemicals on cancer risk is unknown and difficult to determine.
- Although some chemicals in pesticides are probable human carcinogens, exposure is hard to assess.
- Pesticide regulation is based on industry data rather than on protection of health.





# Most Important Findings

- We do not know the impact of environmental factors on cancer incidence.
- Children are at special risk.
- Not enough research is being done.





# Recommendation

“Green chemistry” initiatives and research, including process redesign, should be pursued and supported more aggressively, but new products must be well studied prior to and following their introduction into the environment and stringently regulated to ensure their short- and long-term safety.



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"Some say it's irrevocable, others say it's irreversible. Given such an absence of consensus I suggest we do nothing drastic."



# Contact Information

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